



NEWS RELEASE

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AUGUST 19, 2004

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TWO KC MEN SENTENCED IN 'REVERSE STING' OPERATION FOR 400 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that two Kansas City, Mo., men have been sentenced in federal court for possession with intent to distribute 400 pounds of marijuana. The case resulted from a “reverse sting operation,” Graves said, in which a law enforcement officer delivered a tractor-trailer load of marijuana to the defendants.

Damon D. Franklin, 26, of Kansas City, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Nanette K. Laughrey this afternoon to 15 years and eight months in federal prison without parole. The court sentenced **Franklin** as a career offender, Graves explained, due to his prior felony convictions for burglary and attempted burglary.

James D. Fugate, 20, of Kansas City, was sentenced on Aug. 18, 2004, to three years and 10 months in federal prison without parole.

On May 5, 2004, **Damon Franklin** pleaded guilty to possession with intent to distribute 100 kilograms or more of marijuana on Oct. 7, 2003. **James Fugate** pleaded guilty to the same charge on May 24, 2004.

Co-defendants **Deandre Fugate**, 22, and **David Searcy**, 27, both of Kansas City, also pleaded guilty on May 24, 2004, to the same charge. Co-defendant **Brandon L. Franklin**, 20, of Kansas City, pleaded guilty to the same charge on May 5, 2004.

By pleading guilty, each of the co-defendants admitted that they met at the Ameristar Casino on Oct. 7, 2003, and traveled together to a warehouse in Kansas City to receive a 400-pound (181.44 kilograms) shipment of marijuana.

The co-defendants were arrested in a reverse sting operation in which an undercover law

enforcement officer drove the tractor-trailer load of marijuana, which was unloaded by the defendants, after the drug deal was arranged through a confidential informant.

All of the co-defendants in this case were originally charged in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Nov. 21, 2003, in Kansas City.

A sentencing hearing for **Searcy** has been scheduled for Sept. 30, 2004. Sentencing hearings for **Brandon Franklin** and **Deandre Fugate** will be scheduled after the completion of presentence investigations by the United States Probation Office.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David M. Ketchmark and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew P. Wolesky. It was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Jackson County Drug Task Force and the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow